

Date of Mailing: May 12, 2003

ATTACHMENT A

Pending Claims (as of 05/11/2003)

1-97. (Canceled or Withdrawn)

sub
ei 98. (New) A method for an electronic communications message system to prioritize an information message comprising:

determining a personalized identifier corresponding to the message, wherein the personalized identifier does not require coordination between a user of the method and an originator of the message;

locating the personalized identifier in a database;

DI assigning from the database a priority code corresponding to the personalized identifier; and

depositing the message into at least two of a plurality of virtual mailboxes wherein the message is prioritized within such virtual mailboxes based on the priority code.

99. (New) The method of claim 98, wherein the database, the personalized identifier, the priority code, and the correlation between the personalized identifier and the priority code are initially defined by the user and subsequently changeable by the user.

100. (New) The method of claim 98 wherein the prioritization includes an element of providing a personalized response to the originator.

101. (New) The method of claim 98, wherein the information message is a voice mail message.

102. (New) The method of claim 101, wherein the personalized identifier is derived from a voiceprint of an audio element associated with the voice mail message.

103. (New) The method of claim 101, wherein the information message is a voice mail message and wherein the prioritization includes an element of providing a personalized response to the originator based on the personalized identifier and the priority code.

DI cont
104. (New) The method of claim 98, wherein the elements of the method are performed by an automated system selected from the group consisting of: a computer, a voice-type message storage device, a facsimile machine, a combination of any two of the foregoing, and a combination of the first three of the foregoing.

105. (New) The method of claim 98, wherein the personalized identifier is a biometric signature associated with the originator and the information message.

106. (New) A system for prioritizing a received information message, comprising:
a database;
a plurality of known personalized identifiers stored in the database,

a plurality of priority codes, wherein each of the known personalized identifiers is associated with one of the plurality of priority codes;

a computing device for determining a first personalized identifier associated with a received information message, wherein the first personalized identifier is not dependent upon coordination between a user of the system and an originator of the received information message;

a priority assignment device for assigning a priority code to the received information message corresponding to a priority code associated with any matched first personalized identifier; and

a prioritizer to prioritize the message according to the priority code.

107. (New) The system of claim 106, further comprising:

a plurality of virtual mailboxes wherein the message is prioritized within such virtual mailboxes based on the priority code in at least two of the priority of mailboxes.

108. (New) The system of claim 106, wherein the database, the first personalized identifier, the priority code, and the correlation between the personalized identifier and the priority code are initially defined by the user and subsequently changeable by the user.

109. (New) The system of claim 106, further comprising:

a response device for providing a personalized response to the originator.

110. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein the received information message is a voice mail message.

111. (New) The system of claim 110, wherein the personalized identifier is derived from a voiceprint of an audio element associated with the voice mail message.

112. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein the personalized identifier is a biometric signature associated with the originator and the message.

DI
cont

113. (New) A computer-readable medium of instructions and data, comprising:

- a received message;
- a personalized identifier corresponding to the received message, wherein the personalized identifier does not require coordination between a user of the medium and an originator of the received message;
- computer instructions for receiving the message and the personalized identifier;
- a database containing known personalized identifiers, each personalized identifier associated with a priority code of a plurality of priority codes;
- computer instructions for correlating the received personalized identifier with a known personalized identifier; and
- computer instructions for prioritizing the message according to the priority code associated with the correlated known personalized identifier.

114. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 113, wherein the database, the first personalized identifier, the priority code, and the correlation between the personalized identifier and the priority code are initially defined by the user and subsequently changeable by said user.

115. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 113, further comprising:
computer instructions for providing a personalized response to the originator.

DI cont
116. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 113, wherein the received information message is a voice mail message.

117. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 116, wherein the personalized identifier is derived from a voiceprint of an audio element associated with the voice mail message.

118. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 113, wherein the personalized identifier is a biometric signature associated with the originator and the received message.